

Journeys

The Newsletter of the Hispanic Theological Initiative vol. 1, no. 1
Advancing Theological Reflection Through Hispanic Eyes

The Hispanic Theological Initiative Celebrates its Re-granting

With its re-grant of \$3.3 from The Pew Charitable Trusts, HTI launches into its next three year cycle of scholarships and support programs aimed at increasing the number of Hispanic faculty in theological institutions in the United States and Puerto Rico. In view of this, HTI has made several modifications and additions to its scholarship and programming that are worth noting and celebrating. First, we are pleased to announce that HTI will continue its multi-year doctoral fellowship for students pursuing academic degrees in theological studies, as well as its one-year dissertation fellowship to help qualifying students complete their dissertation. Furthermore, it has increased the number of fellowships at each level to nine awards, for a total of 24 additional awards. The amount of the awards has also increased to \$13,000 at the doctoral level and \$16,000 at the dissertation level. A net-working fund of \$1,000 (doctoral) and \$500 (dissertation) is also part of each award.

In accordance with HTI's comprehensive effort at supporting HTI graduate awardees, we will continue the community building strategy designed to mentor and network up-coming Hispanic Scholars. We will do this through our mentoring program, which pairs HTI awardees with senior scholars, our regional conferences, which bring awardees together to "touch base," to network and hear and participate in panels and lectures by Latino scholars and, through the Summer Workshops. We are particularly excited about our new up-coming offerings and events which include specialized teaching consultations for dissertation awardees; a triennial conference for HTI alums and their administrators that will focus on issues of mentoring, recruitment, retention and development of Hispanic faculty; the HTI Placement Service for awardees; an HTI Series and an HTI Book Prize. (Please see more information concerning the Series Award below.) Other important programmatic events include the yearly Latinas in Theology gathering, the Writers' Workshops, Mentor Training weekend, publication of our biennial series called *Perspectivas: Occasional Papers* and our newsletter, *Journeys*.

As many of you already know, the masters fellowships, previously a component of HTI, has been rolled over into the Hispanic Ministry Initiative (HMI), a strategy for strengthening Hispanic ministry initiated by Pew and slated to begin its programming in 2002. The HMI, a three-part strategy, will include a fellowship program with two emphases: a pre-doctoral and a ministry or professional track. The HMI's pre-doctoral masters fellowship will serve as a direct pipeline to the Hispanic Theological Initiative. We look forward to HMI's service and impact upon our leadership and communities.

Finally, we would like to invite you to our new and developing web-page www.htiprogram.org to learn more about our events, find out about job opportunities in the academy, leave a message on our bulletin board, get to know our awardees.

Dr. Zaida Maldonado Pérez
Director
1997-1999 Awardee

Inside...

Upcoming events

News about awardees

2000-2001 Award recipients

Familia

Awardees Corner

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12 Library Place
Princeton, NJ 08540
(609-252-1721
1-800-525-5522
Fax: 609-252-1738
e-mail: HTI@ptsem.edu
www.htiprogram.org

Zaida Maldonado Pérez
Director

Joanne Rodríguez
Assistant Director

Angela Schoepf
Administrative Secretary

NEWSLETTER SLOGAN

Our newsletter's slogan, "Advancing Theological Reflection Through Hispanic Eyes" was chosen among several other fine submissions by HTI awardees. The winner, Leopoldo A. Sánchez 2001-2002 Doctoral Awardee, submitted the winning slogan. His description of the slogan included:

"Active' description of the goal of the 'comunidad' (i.e. a community that is actively and constantly advancing in its mission). Such community is 'advancing' or promoting much needed theological reflection through Hispanic/Latino eyes."

This slogan captures HTI's mission to provide a qualified pool of candidates that will advance theological reflection that does not compromise or negate who they are as Latinas/Latinos *comprometidas/os* to our communities both in word and deed.

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Regional Conferences

One of the ways the Hispanic Theological Initiative responds to the need for community building and learning is through the HTI Regional Conferences. Held every year across the United States and Puerto Rico, they provide a place where HTI awardees come together to share progress, concerns, successes, and celebrate their common bond as HTI scholars. The Regional Conferences also provide the opportunity to bring to the hosting institution public lectures presented by Latina/o scholars that seek to focus on key issues relating to theological education and Latina/o scholarship. Speakers and topics for this year's Regional Conferences included: Dr. Alex García-Rivera on "A Wounded Innocence: Sketches for a Theology of Art," Dr. Roberto Goizueta and Dr. Daisy Machado on "Latina Religion/Theology at the Academy: Critical Issues Concerning Diversity," and Dr. Michael Mendiola, Dr. Theresa Chaves-Sauceda and Dr. Robert DeVito on "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Latino Theology: Is There Room for Discussion?"

Upcoming Events

MENTORS' TRAINING

June 8-10, 2001
Miami, FL

Dr. Jean-Pierre Ruiz, facilitator

SUMMER WORKSHOP

July 20-25, 2001
Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, NJ

Workshops

- *Career Orientation* by Ms. Susan Terman
- *Writers' Workshop* by Robert Ratcliff and Ulrike Guthrie
- *Teaching Consultations* by Richard Valantasis
- *Research* by Kate Skrebutenas
- *Coping* by Rebecca Radillo
- *Computing* by Loida Martell-Otero

Lecture

"Latinas Beyond Borders – Latina Activism and Women's Faith-Based Mobilization" by Dr. Milagros Peña

LATINAS IN THEOLOGY

August 17-19, 2001
Eden Theological Seminary
Saint Louis, MO

WRITERS' WEEKEND

September 28-30, 2001
Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, NJ

Familia!

Margaret and Tom Flores and had their baby girl on Friday, December 1st, 2000. Her name is Marielle Amanda. Weight: 8lbs.14oz. Marielle Amanda's brother Daniel, is very happy.



Lucas Antonio Sánchez was born on March 20, 2001. He is the first child of Tracy Lynn & Leopoldo Antonio Sánchez. Weight: 8 lbs. 10 oz. Height: 20.5 in. Mother and child are doing very well.

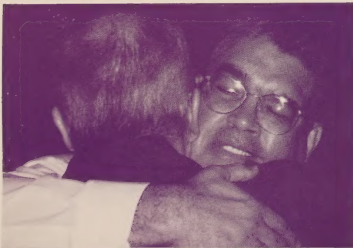
David Sánchez and his wife, Denna-Marie, are expecting their first child June 27th. They are both thrilled and request the prayers of the HTI community.



Nuestra gente en acción

Our people in action, top to bottom:

Brendaly Velez, '00-'01 Masters Awardee, leading an HTI worship service; Thomas Flores, '00-'01 HTI Doctoral Awardee, sharing talents at the Summer Workshop; Mentor Dr. Samuel Soliván, hugging one of our awardees; '00-'01 Awardees and Mentors.



2001-2002 Awardees

This year's awardees represent six countries including the Caribbean. They are comprised of Roman Catholics and Protestants from 11 denominations. They also represent 18 different schools in the United States.

Masters Renewal Awardees

These scholars were awardees for the 2000-2001 academic year

Rafael Acosta
Cesar Chaves
Adelita Garza
América Rojas
Christopher Ysaïs

Doctoral Studies Awardees

María Teresa Dávila
Joseph De León
Francisco Javier Goitia-Padilla
María del C. Laureano-Ortega
Angel F. Méndez, OP
Santiago O. Piñon, Jr.
Ricardo Ramos-Díaz
Mayra de Lourdes Rivera Rivera
Ariel Rodríguez
Carla Elena Roland Guzmán
Gabriel A. Salguero
Angel Santiago Vendrell

Doctoral Renewal Awardees

These scholars were awardees for the 2000-2001 academic year

Thomas Vincent Flores
Juan Hernández
Kenneth Johnson-Mondragón
Ruben Muñoz-Larrondo
Rady Roldán-Figueroa

Special Mentoring Awardees

These scholars have entered their examination year. This award will allow them to work with an HTI mentor throughout the 2001-2002

María del Socorro Castañeda
Hjamil Alfonso Martínez-Vázquez
Manuel Mejido
Jesús Rodríguez
Ruben Rosario-Rodríguez
Leopoldo Antonio Sánchez-Merino
Efraín Velázquez

Dissertation Year Awardees

Javier R. Alanís
Teresa Delgado
Suzanne E. Hoefkamp-Segovia
Hugo Magallanes-Tejeda
Theresa Torres, O.S.B.

New publishing project from HTI

HTI has established a full and equal partnership with the University of Scranton Press, a publisher affiliated with Consortium of Jesuit University Presses, concerning a series of books to be published about the religious experience of U.S. Latinas and Latinos. It is conceived as an interdisciplinary and ecumenical project.

Each year HTI will invite persons to submit their dissertations for competition for the best doctoral dissertation dealing with U.S. Hispanics religious experience. Winning entries will be published by the University of Scranton Press.

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements: Any original, book-length (English language) dissertation may be submitted by its author to HTI if that author has not yet published a book. The author must com-

plete an application and follow HTI deadlines. Manuscripts will be considered from any discipline, on all topics, and from every denomination.

Deadlines: Manuscripts and applications must be received at HTI by Dec 7 of 2001. **Judging:** Manuscripts will be evaluated for originality, scholarly acumen, timeliness, lucidity of expression, and contribution to the field of US Hispanic studies. All decisions by HTI are final.

Questions concerning application for the award should be directed to HTI. Questions concerning the series publication should be directed to the series editor: Dr. Kenneth G. Davis, OFM, Conv., 1 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577-1021, Tel: (812) 357-6542, Fax: (812) 357-6792

News Flash

Dr. Paul Barton, HTI 1997-1998

Dissertation Awardee, 2000-2001 Research and Writing Awardee, has been the co-director of a faculty development program at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest this year, titled "Teología en Conjunto: The Hispanic Scholars Project." The purpose of the project is to provide Hispanic consultants in the various fields of study to help the seminary faculty plan and implement Hispanic perspectives and issues in their courses.

Three of the HTI Post-Doctoral Awardees, **Dr. Rudiger Busto**, HTI 1999-2000, **Dr. Lara Medina**, also HTI 1997-1998 Dissertation Awardee and **Dr. Luis León**, HTI 2000-2001, are currently participating in the American Academy of Religion (AAR) Lilly-Luce Teaching Workshop, Teaching Beyond the Borders. Lara and Rudy are currently co-chairs of the AAR U.S. Latino/a Religion, Culture and Society Group (formerly the Hispanic American Religion, Culture and Society Group). HTI familia serving on the steering committee are Dr. Francisco Lozada, HTI 1999-2000 Post Doctoral Awardee and HTI Advisory Committee Member, and Dr. Zaida Maldonado Pérez, HTI 1997-1998 Dissertation Awardee and current HTI Director. Everyone is invited to attend the Denver AAR annual meeting in November, specially the Group's panels on Latino/a religion which promise to be informative and provocative.

Socorro Castañeda, HTI 2000-2001 Doctoral Awardee, participated in the Hispanic Churches in American Public Life conference, which took place September 1-2, 2000 at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her paper proposal was entitled "Toward a New Critical Consciousness: a case study of the Mexican American Cultural Center." Socorro was also awarded a research assistantship for the Hispanic Churches and American Public Life National Research. Socorro successfully defended her MA thesis and passed with honors. Now she is finishing up her doctoral requirements and working on her dissertation proposal. She also received a small grant to begin research in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Texas/Mexico border) among a faith-based Mexican immigrant women's group.

Arturo Chavez, HTI 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 Doctoral Awardee, was chosen as a recipient of the 2000 Cyrus Ames Wright Award. This award is given to an outstanding doctoral student and is voted upon by the faculty of Iliff School of Theology. Arturo accepted a job with the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio and began on December 1, 2000. He is part of their faculty and pastoral staff, teaching students who are involved in ministry within the Latino community.

Dr. Miguel De La Torre's book, for which HTI provided the Research and Writing Award, is at the publishers. *The Quest for the Cuban Cultural Christ* is co-authored with Edwin Aponte and will be available this Fall by Orbis Press. Orbis Press will also release his book *Reading the Bible from the Margins* in Spring 2002. Finally Eerdmans Press will release his book *Santería: A Growing U.S. Religion* in Spring 2003. Dr. Miguel De La Torre was HTI 2000-2001 Post Doctoral Awardee.

Dr. Esther Díaz-Bolet, HTI 1997-1998 Dissertation Awardee and Selection Committee member, has joined the educational ministries faculty at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as Assistant Professor. This is a tenure track position.

Dr. Miguel H. Díaz, HTI 1998-1999 Dissertation Awardee and Mentor, has revised his doctoral dissertation into a book. The book is forthcoming by Orbis Press in their *Faith and Culture* Series. It is entitled: *On Being Human: U.S. Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives*. He has accepted a position as Academic Dean of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary.

In October '99, Orbis Books published *From the Heart of Our People: Latinola Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*, edited by **Dr. Orlando Espin**, HTI Mentor and Selection Committee Member, and **Miguel H. Díaz**. This volume is a collection of thirteen essays by various contributors.

Dr. Gastón Espinosa, HTI 1999-2000 Post-Doctoral Awardee, organized the Hispanic Churches in American Public Life regional conference at Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, CA. The conference took place on Friday, May 4, 2001. Recent articles include: "El Azteca: Francisco Olazabal and Latino Pentecostal Charisma, Power and Faith Healing in the Borderlands," and "Selena and the Politics of Cultural Redemption." His presentations include "The Aztec Pentecostal: Latino Pentecostal Identity in Jim Crow America" and "Trends and Demographic Shifts in U.S. Latino Religions."

Dr. Eduardo Fernandez, HTI 1997-1998 Post-Doctoral Awardee, was elected president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians (ACHTUS). His book, *La Cosecha: Harvesting Contemporary United States Hispanic Theology (1972-1998)*, was published.

Renata Furst, HTI 1999-2000 Dissertation Year Awardee, is one of two Canadians that received a scholarship to attend a 3 week workshop sponsored by the International Institute of Culture (an American institution), in Eichstadt, Germany (near Munich) on the subject Christ Redeemer of Culture. She is the editor of HTI's *Prespectivas: Occasional Papers*.

Dr. Alejandro Garcia-Rivera's book, *The Community of the Beautiful: A Theological*

Aesthetics won a Catholic Press Association award in the category of Academic Theology and, an article "Can God see me when I go to the bathroom?" and other questions children ask about God" which appeared in the May 99 issue of U.S. Catholic, won the Best in Religious Writing award by the United Church Press. Dr. Alejandro Garcia-Rivera is HTI Selection Committee member and mentor.

Dr. Raúl Gómez, SDS, HTI 1999-2000 Dissertation Year Awardee, successfully defended his dissertation on February 26, 2001 at The Catholic University of America, Washington DC. The title of his dissertation is *Lignum Crucis: The Cross in the Good Friday Celebration of the Hispano-Mozarabic Triduum*. His Ph.D. is in Liturgical Studies.

Awilda González-Tejera, HTI 1998-1999 Doctoral Level Awardee, 1999-2000 Special Mentoring Awardee, and 2000-2001 Dissertation Awardee. Her prospectus, *Intercession in Paul: In light of Greco-Roman Understandings of Intercession* was approved, "as submitted" (which almost never happens).

Michelle González, HTI 1998-1999 Doctoral Level Awardee, and 1999-2000 Special Mentoring Awardee, passed the oral defense of her exams on September 24, 2000 with distinction. She has accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles.

Alberto Hernandez, HTI 2000-2001 Dissertation Awardee has been appointment to the faculty of Iliff School of Theology as Assistant Professor of the History of Christianity.

Hugo Magallanes-Tejeda, HTI 1997-1998 Doctoral Level Awardee, 1998-1999 Special Mentoring Awardee, completed his doctoral exams with distinction at Drew University in October 1999, and was hired as Assistant Professor at Asbury Theological Seminary-Florida.

David Maldonado, HTI former Selection Committee Member, has assumed his post as the first Latino President of Iliff School of Theology in Denver.

Dr. Timothy Matovina, HTI Mentor, is among seven U.S. theologians to receive the Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology for the 2001-02 academic year. This is considered the most prestigious fellowship in the field. Dr. Matovina will complete work on a book devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe At San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas.

Pedro Miranda Torres, HTI 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 Masters Level Awardee, graduated with an M.Div. from El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico on May 27. He graduated Magna cum Laude and was awarded a prize in Homiletics. He works as the youth minister in the Iglesia Cristiana Discipulos de Cristo en Sierra Linda.

At our last gathering of *Latinas in Theology*, Renata Furst, 1999-2000 HTI Dissertation Awardee, walked our masters and doctoral awardees through a process of discerning and surviving our call to doctoral studies. Although particularly framed for Latinas, her advice is also valid for Latino doctoral students (and racial/ethnic students in general). The following is a synopsis of her workshop:

Surviving Doctoral Studies

Hispanic/Latina women who undertake doctoral level studies in theology often face obstacles that may seem un-surmountable. Although women have made major inroads in a male dominated field over the last twenty-five years, we Latinas are still in the process of building major role models in different branches of this field. Members of the Latinas in theology group report difficulties ranging from humiliation at the hands of faculty, to being passed over for scholarships, grants and other opportunities, as well as financial difficulties, as obstacles that have to be overcome in order to survive in the academy.

While many obstacles may come from external sources, there are still some internal steps we can take to avoid the pitfalls that tempt us to abandon the struggle. Two great pitfalls are discouragement and lack of relevance. Discouragement, implies losing courage or resolve while questioning the relevance of our subject, or the value of our contribution to Hispanic/Latino theology and theology in general and can paralyze a person intellectually.

Discernment is the key to avoiding discouragement. Take the time it takes to think, analyze and pray about your call to undertake doctoral studies. The following questions can shed some light on this process:

- Is God calling me to be a better person through this? Is my family going to benefit from this experience?
- Do I sense that my community is "missioning" me for this purpose?
- Am I entering into this experience in complete freedom (although not completely free of doubt?)

Discuss your discernment with a close friend, spouse or mentor. Write out your process of discernment. When doubts set in during the years of studies, go back and review the process in the light of your present difficulties. Fall back on your experience of that call in times of discouragement.

- Our image of God can sometimes be an obstacle to our studies. Ask yourself:
- Do I really believe God cares?
- Is God a God of plenty or famine in my experience? Do I feel abandoned in either one of these situations?
- Is God present to me in silence, suffering and aloneness as well as in "fiesta"?

The "desert" experience of moving towards the unknown is part of the requirement for originality at the doctoral level. Work continually on your image of God, especially God-in-the-desert, through prayer and reflection.

Foster roots in your community. Our community gives roots to our identity. The Hispanic/Latino community in particular, is a source of new images and modes of thinking. But don't let your community limit you either. Doctoral work pushes the frontiers of both the center and the periphery.

Develop a support group. Face it, you need support. Superwomen and lone rangers rarely negotiate turbulence successfully. You need support from your peers, and you need it from those who have never stepped into a university. You also need support from a competent academic. Often supervisors do not provide the best support for their students. This is probably because . . . for the rest on "Surviving Doctoral Studies" visit www.htiprogram.com!

AN OASIS ALONG THE JOURNEY

Studying at a seminary or university takes a great deal out of a student's life and time, and "minorities" in these institutions find it takes even more of their souls. For HTI awardees, however, there is an oasis in this desert. HTI Regional meetings not only create a space where students and professors gather together, hear Latina/o scholars speak, and visit another academic institution for a day or two. Regional meetings give us the opportunity to share with the community and the *caminantes* of the same path. These meetings keep our dreams and hopes alive; they reaffirm for whom we are working.

The key ingredient that enables us to continue on the path is the reminder that we do not walk it alone. Remembering that the God-talk should be accompanied by the God-walk fuels our work and efforts. HTI Regional meetings boosts the spirit of its participants so they can deal with their particular issues. Our paths can be lonely and hard, but getting together in these meetings means solidarity and mutuality. We are strengthened by our shared commonalities and united by our combined differences. Certainly, the Hispanic Theological Initiative has created a space of oasis so we can continue our travel across the desert.

Hjamil Martinez Vasquez
Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago
Master awardee 97-98, Master renewal 98-99
Doctoral awardee 99-00, Doctoral renewal 00-01

INSPIRATION & COMMISERATION

As my wife, Jill, and I drove into Claremont for the 2000 HTI Southwest Regional Meeting, I excitedly told her about the previous HTI evening events: the inspiring lecture by Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, meeting up with old friends and commiserating with understanding people regarding the woes of graduate school. I contin-

(continued on next page)

ued for a while when Jill looked at me, smiled, and said, "I like the person you are right after HTI events."

For the last two years, the Regional meetings have been an important part of my academic year and an important part of staying motivated. Even though I'm always reticent about the timing of the meetings, I come away reinvigorated and with a renewed sense of purpose. Perhaps the most overwhelming part of graduate school for me is the sense of isolation. The opportunity to talk with friends and share in each others' triumphs and setbacks reminds me that I am part of something much larger than myself.

Ruben Dupertuis
Claremont Graduate University
Doctoral awardee 98-99
Special Mentoring 99-00

HTI: MORE THAN A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Like every doctoral student sponsored by the HTI, I have received a mentoring award. My mentor visits my campus twice a year, providing me with

academic guidance in my field of studies (New Testament) and with the needed orientation on how to insert myself into a scholarly world in which Hispanics are numeric minorities. My Mentor also aids the institution where I study to understand and meet the specific needs of Latino/a students.

Armando J. Rodríguez Jr.
Loyola University Chicago
Master awardee 97-98, Doctoral awardee 98-99
Doctoral Renewal 99-00, Special Mentoring 00-01

Neither Mad nor a Fool

The doctoral process is, by its very nature, a very isolating and impersonal one. This makes theologizing difficult for Latinas/os, since we are communitarian, and tend to do our theology *en conjunto*. The difficulty is compounded as one begins to embark on a project that may not command the respect or interest of professors, or, in some cases, of one's peers. As Jeremiah once did, one is compelled, however to press on, perhaps inspired by a flash, a vision, an intuitive sense that one is neither mad nor a fool.

It is in this process that the solidari-

ty offered by the Hispanic Theological Initiative becomes a lifesaver. This support is communicated on many levels. The sharing with one's peers when we meet, their respect, ideas and love is of the essence for our intellectual and spiritual survival. The words of encouragement, but also of accountability, by the Director and her staff at HTI are another important source of support. The prayers of all, the laughter, the feedback, the phone calls, the emails with important information, humanize the process.

Dr. Loida Martell-Otero
1999-2000 Diss. Awardee

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Hispanic Theological Initiative

12 Library Place Princeton, NJ 08540 tel. 609-252-1721 toll free. 800-575-5522
fax. 609-252-1738 email. hti@ptsem.edu www.htiprogram.org